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ABSTRACT

Three basic approaches to discipline and child care are the obedience-oriented/punitive, the indulgent/permissive, and the person-enabling/justice approaches. The obedience-oriented/punitive approach, primarily concerned with obedience, sometimes uses praise and rewards manipulatively. When they fail, coercive punishment is used. The indulgent/permissive approach indulges or protects some individuals while others are neglected, denied fair treatment, or deprived. Those with superior power or those deemed deserving and entitled to special privilege are allowed to get what they want and to avoid responsibility. The person-enabling/justice approach is primarily concerned with enabling full functioning persons within an environment that is safe, fair, and constructively caring. Each approach creates and perpetuates a very different culture and type of conscience. Each teaches a different concept of social justice and models differing interpersonal skills. Therefore, adopting any system of discipline that gets results will not do, for considerably more is at stake than simply exacting obedience. (RH)

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THREE DIFFERING SYSTEMS OF DISCIPLINE AND THEIR IMPACT ON CONSCIENCE AND CULTURE

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We transmit our most basic personal and social values and meanings to our children through the type of discipline we use. In addition to the meanings and values we actually express in our daily living and use to solve interpersonal problems, we communicate, through tone of voice, facial and bodily expression, and the words we select, important meta-messages, meanings <u>about</u> who the other person is and how we feel about them, <u>about</u> how we understand our relationship and desire it to be, and <u>about</u> the cultural values and roles we believe in and seek to perpetuate.

Therefore we cannot adopt any system of discipline "that gets results" for more is at stake than just obtaining obedience. We must choose only after we consider a system's impact on children's self-esteem and self-image, conscience formation, emotional and cognitive growth, understanding of others and social justice, knowledge of how to handle feelings and conflict constructively, and realization of their own potential to become full-functioning persons.

There are three basic approaches to discipline and child care. Each transmits and perpetuates is own distinct culture as it disciplines children. Each affects the type of life-world that children form, (their image of self, the world of others, and the interpersonal skills that relate self and world). They are:

1. The Obedience-Oriented, Punitive Culture which is primarily concerned with obedience. Praise and rewards are sometimes used manipulatively, but more often, and when they fail, reliance is upon coercive punishment.
2. The Indulgent, Permissive Culture which indulges or protects some individuals while others are neglected, denied fair treatment, or deprived. Those with superior power or those deemed deserving and entitled to special privilege are allowed to get what they want and to avoid responsibility.
3. The Person-Enabling, Justice Culture that is primarily concerned with enabling full-functioning persons within an environment that is safe, fair, and constructively caring.

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Each approach creates and perpetuates a very different culture and type of conscience. Each teaches a different concept of social justice and models differing interpersonal skills.

THE OBEDIENCE-ORIENTED, PUNITIVE CULTURE

The goal of discipline and child rearing within the Obedience-Oriented, Punitive culture is to obtain unquestioning obedience to those having "authority" or superior power. While some primarily emphasize the use of positive reinforcement and social rewards to obtain compliance, the basic structure is coercive. Decisions are made for children, they are not allowed input into important matters affecting them. Punishment, (the <u>intentional</u> inflicting of pain to get even or to change behavior), is sanctioned and relied upon.

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Inflicting pain is believed to be effective, fair, and necessary. Disobedience is punished with methods ranging from death, to physical torture or emprisonment, humiliation, scolding, rejection, punishment, banishment, or ridicule. Might or "authority" makes right. Those in control are not held accountable to a justice system. Justice is a system of rules to be obeyed. Wrong-doers must be punished and justice is satisfied when punishment has occured. Social Justice is revenge, an "eye for an eye". Society has two unequal classes; those in power that are privileged and above the law (the in-group) , and those who are subservient and may be exploited or oppressed (the out-group). Individuals have no intrinsic value but live to serve and obey those that rule society. This culture encourages the development of a Punitive Conscience whose primary purpose is to avoid punishment or guilt. Lying, evasion, withdrawal, repression of feeling, displacement of rage, blaming others, or submission to aggressors are all acceptable and necessary since they enable a person to avoid punishment. Guilt and shame are induced to coerce people and force them to feel bad about themselves. Those who are weaker are bullied and exploited, those who are stronger are submitted to and obeyed. External controls are necessary to maintain stability for morality is based on fear. The development of the Exploitative Conscience, which uses others for personal gain and pleasure, and the Other-Directed Conscience, which seeks praise and approval, is also encouraged.

THE INDULGENT, PERMISSIVE CULTURE

There are two variations of the Indulgent, Permissive Culture. One is permissive and indulgent of children, desiring to prevent or remove all children's discomfort. They are over-protected, given what they wish, and usually not forced to do anything against their will. They may be allowed to terrorize, exploit, deprive, or abuse weaker siblings, other children, and often adults. Dependency, passivity, and selfishness are sanctioned. Parental guilt and masochistic self-denial are encouraged. Children come to understand justice as getting one's way and anything that works is permissible. Rules are seen as applying to others but not to self. Society and parents are believed to owe children total care and comfort. Guilt is non-existent since responsibility is never acknowledged. Individual desires take precedence over equality under the law or basic fairness. Society is composed of two classes, the privileged children and their adult, care taking servants. The Exploitative or the Other-Directed Conscience may be fostered also.

The other variation is indulging and permissive of parents, allowing them to neglect, abandon, exploit, or do anything they wish with or to their children. Children may be left to raise themselves and often are expected to satisfy their parent's needs. Justice is understood as the freedom not to be made to take care of others, doing one's own thing, and pursuing selfish gain. Punitive discipline, denial of affection, and physical and emotional neglect are sanctioned. Society has two classes, the privileged parents and the neglected or exploited children. The formation of the Exploitative and Punitive Conscience is encouraged.

THE PERSON-ENABLING, JUSTICE CULTURE

The goal of discipline and child rearing in the Person-Enabling, Justice Culture is to develop full-functioning, caring, creative, and responsible persons. The individual person has basic worth and inalienable basic rights, therefore power must be legally exercised with the consent of the governed. Leaders are held responsible under the law. There is equality of law and opportunity. The structure and intention of Justice is an environment that is safe, fair, and constructively caring. All have the right to physical and emotional safety. There is an honest and fair way of living together, making decisions, and resolving conflict. Justice strives to protect the innocent and their right of self-determination, correct unfairness, and use due process to settle conflict. It uses fair consequences; that correct injustice, restore or replace, accomplish goals, or restore the wrong-doer to healthy functioning as long as safety and fairness are not jeopardized. The primary goal of discipline is to enable persons to function and maintain the Justice Culture. Justice does not require the deliberate infliction of pain, humiliation, or bannishment. Guilt is understood as an indication that the love relationship with another has been violated and handled by correcting the injustice and estrangement. This culture encourages the formation of the Constructive-Caring Conscience which lives by inner controls based on caring and understanding, stands up constructively for self and others, and values the worth and functioning of all. "Richness of feelings and appreciative caring, helping establish a justice culture, constructive integrity work-these three and their contents are what conscience is and how it grows". (Martha Snyder, The Young Child as Person, p.85)

THE STRUCTURE AND INTENTION OF A JUSTICE CULTURE

1. To be SAFE
   All have the right to be safe and self-fulfilling. No one is to be intentionally physically or mentally hurt.

2. To be FAIR
   All have the right to fair treatment which includes;
   - Basic Honesty
   - Basic Liberty and Equality
   - Responsible Participation
   - Due Process (non-violent, fair resolution of conflict)
   - Fair Consequences (that correct the injustice, restore, accomplish task, restore to healthy relationship) Not punishments (that intentionally rely pain or fear)

3. To be CONSTRUCTIVELY CARING
   Constructive caring involves:
   - Enabling People to Function
   - Restoring the Wrong-doer to Healthy Participation (as long as a safe, fair environment is not compromised for others)

6 STEPS FOR HANDLING ANY CONFLICT SITUATION*

(It is not necessary to follow all of these steps in every situation but difficult or complicated situations may require them all.)

1. ESTABLISH SAFETY
   MAKE THE SITUATION SAFE SO NO ONE WILL BE PHYSICALLY OR EMOTIONALLY HURT. USE ONLY ENOUGH PHYSICAL CONTROL TO MAKE THE ENVIRONMENT SAFE, NOT TO PUNISH. LET GO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

2. FIND OUT WHAT HAS HAPPENED AND HOW PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT IT.
   IN A CALM MANNER, WITHOUT PROBING OR CRITICIZING IF POSSIBLE, ENABLE CHILDREN TO EXPLAIN WHAT HAS HAPPENED AND HOW THEY FEEL ABOUT IT. "SOMETHING HAPPENED?"

3. UNDERSTAND EACH PERSONS FEELINGS
   PUT INTO WORDS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE INTENTIONS AND FEELINGS OF THOSE THAT ARE INVOLVED.

4. MAINTAIN THE JUSTICE CULTURE
   EXPLAIN WHAT THE JUSTICE CULTURE MEANS IN THIS SITUATION. (A JUSTICE CULTURE IS SAFE, FAIR, AND CONSTRUCTIVELY CARING - IT ENABLES PEOPLE TO FUNCTION AND RESTORES PEOPLE TO PRODUCTIVE PARTICIPATION)

5. GIVE CHILDREN A CHANCE TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM
   INVOLVE ALL WHO ARE PRESENT IN SOLVING THE PROBLEM. HELP BY DEFINING THE PROBLEM IN A WAY THEY CAN HANDLE IT, NOT GIVING THEM THE SOLUTION RIGHT AWAY.

6. ENABLE THE CHILDREN TO FUNCTION IN RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH OTHER.
   FIGURE OUT WHAT THE CHILDREN ARE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH AND FIND A WAY TO MAKE IT, OR SOMETHING LIKE IT, HAPPEN.

*Taken from: The Young Child as Person by Martha Snyder, Ross Snyder, and Ross Snyder Jr. New York, Human Sciences Press, 1980

A Person is a Life World

That Integrates and Becomes Three Sets of Meanings

SELF

The meaning of Self is determined by:

Self-Esteem, how we are valued and loved.

Competence, what we can and cannot do.

Inner Speech, how we think about ourself and others.

Intentions, what we are trying to accomplish.

Valuing, what is significant to us.

IN

The meaning of In is determined by:

Skills in;
Understanding,
Processing Feelings,
Communicating,
Problem Solving,
Working with Others.

Strategies of Relationship:
Trusting or fearful avoidance,
Honesty or deceit,
Autonomy or dependency,
Creativity or passivity,
Responsibility or exploitiveness,
Cooperation or selfishness,
Loving or destructiveness.

WORLD

The meaning of World include the understanding of:

Persons,
Groups of People,
Justice,
Social Structures and Roles,
Objects,
Causality,
Values.

(Life World is also the best way to conceptualize Conscience.)

This material is taken from "The Young Child as Person; Towards the Development of a Healthy Conscience" by Martha Snyder.

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